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ABSTRACT

The first of a series of publications to be issued by the Commission on Civil Rights, this booklet is designed to promote discussion and understanding of the manifestations and costs of racism and, especially, to stimulate action by groups and individuals to effect necessary change. Major topics dealt with are: the significance of and the need for Americans to understand racism: the ways white racism appears to work in society; historical perspective relating overt racism to institutional subordination, and how they work; the economic, political, and psychological benefits provided by racism to whites; and, reinforcement of racism in modern society. Among the basic strategies suggested for combating racism are the following: (1) make all Americans--especially whites--far more conscious of the widespread existence of racism in all its forms, and the immense costs it imposes on the entire Nation; (2) build up the capabilities of minority group members; (3) insure that minority group members are in position to contribute to the design, execution, and evaluation of all major social national policies and programs; and, (4) influence local, State, and national policies and programs, so that they have certain characteristics that will reduce their possible racist effects. (RJ)

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RACISM IN AMERICA

AND HOW TO COMBAT IT

The United States Commission On Civil Rights

Clearinghouse Publication, Urban Series No. 1
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PREFACE

This publication is the first in a series which the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights plans to issue as part of the national clearinghouse responsibility assigned to it by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The central problem on which the publications will focus is racism; those barriers—institutional as well as individual, private as well as public, indirect as well as direct, unintended as well as intended—which prevent persons, because of their race, color, or national origin from freely making economic, social, and political decisions. The objective will be twofold: To promote discussion and understanding of the manifestations and costs of racism and, especially, to stimulate action, by groups and individuals, to effect necessary change.

The first publication in this series, "The Nature of Racism" by Anthony Downs, is designed to promote these objectives. Other publications in the series will deal with techniques; examples of innovative and successful programs, particularly in urban settings. The programs included will be both those which are focused in the majority community and those which operate in minority communities to increase the opportunities and capabilities of their residents. Persons and organizations who are concerned and are seeking solutions hopefully will find this series useful.

This series is part of an Urban Project the Commission formulated this year in an effort to learn more about the process of effecting meaningful and lasting change in local institutions. With the aid of local citizens, in a number of urban communities, the Commission is engaged in factfinding and the dissemination of information that will help solve the problems of those communities as perceived by the people who live there. In these cities, we are particularly concerned with the underlying functional reasons for the failure of society to solve many of its social problems. As John W. Gardner, Chairman of the Urban Coalition and former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare has observed, society continues to be preoccupied with specific evils to be corrected, rather than the development of a society responsive to the need for continuous change.

Thus, both in the Urban Project and the publications, while the Commission will be concerned with specific problems such as housing and education, we will be far more interested in the development of basic tools and techniques for dealing with the process of change. We seek to look past the surface manifestation of racism into the inner workings of our society to determine methods by which basic changes can be brought about.

The alternative to this would be the continued treatment of symptoms while the disease remains unchecked.

Dr. Downs is senior vice-president and a member of the Board of Directors of Real Estate Research Corporation and a consultant to the RAND Corporation, the Urban Institute, the Brookings Institution, the Ford Foundation, and a number of Federal agencies. He served as a consultant to the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders and was formerly a member of the faculty of the University of Chicago in the Economics and Political Science Departments. He is the author of several books and numerous articles.

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Introduction

Judge Otto Kerner

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit

Chairman, The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders

The issue of civil rights for black Americans must engage our every energy and motivation if we are to reach any reasonable and practical solution. There is no "greater priority" as was so succinctly stated in the Civil Disorders Report.

The Report is still a subject of much criticism and not accepted in many quarters of America, yet the facts found and reported are incontestable. There are still those in great numbers who have had no association with minority communities and for them no problem exists; and for those who rub elbows with the black community, there are many who still consciously preserve their "white superiority—black inferiority" concept. There is a third category of those who have some awareness of the problem and yet are unintentionally preserving their prejudices.

"The Nature of Racism in America—and How to Combat It" is direct and succinct and should be must reading for all of us. The paper recognizes the many minority groups that exist in our society that were not covered in the Report due to the fact no civil disorders occurred in the nonblack areas in the summer of 1967.

There is no doubt that all minority groups suffer from discrimination and yet many have been able to escape from poverty. There are many external factors and it is extremely difficult to attempt even an approximation as to their relative importance. There is no doubt in my mind that the condition of being black is one of, if not the most important, of these external factors.

This essay more specifically deals with these external factors and definition of "white racism" than does the Civil Disturbance Report. The examples presented clearly identify racism in its many forms which must be understood before positive programs can be expected to improve relationships and eliminate the present interracial tensions.

I enthusiastically endorse the strategies suggested in this paper. Admittedly they are not all encompassing; however, I am most impressed by its highlighting the necessity of involving the minority community in the planning and administration of efforts and the recognition of the private sector's responsibilities as well as governmental. This is a people-to-people problem and must be solved at the grassroots level requiring the commitment of all disciplines and all persons as is recognized in these strategies set forth.

Americans Need To Understand Racism

Racism is a dirty word in America—and a hotly controversial one.

Calling somebody a "racist" is—and should be—a grievous insult. It implies that the person concerned is guilty of committing a serious injustice. Black Americans accuse the Nation's ethnic majority of white racism; while many whites accuse some Negroes of black racism.

What is racism anyway? What significance does it really have in American life today? Unfortunately, almost no one who uses this word defines it clearly or at all. And it is used in such widely varying ways that it hardly seems to have any commonly agreed upon meaning—except that nearly everyone believes racism is evil and un-American. The result is widespread confusion, uncertainty, and disagreement concerning the nature of racism. Even worse, practically any use of the word calls forth strongly emotional reactions. Rather than consider the subject reasonably, Americans of all colors usually adopt self-righteous and defensive views about it, even though racism is one of the most complicated and profoundly important issues in the Nation's history.

Because racism is too important in the destiny of America to allow this confusion to continue unchallenged, this paper seeks to clarify its meaning, to measure its true significance in American life, and to indicate some ways to combat it.

Significance of Racism

Millions of Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Negroes, Indians, and other minority groups in our society suffer from severe deprivation and injustice—not only in the past—but now. Many widely varying factors cause this deplorable situation. They include historical development, economic and physical conditions, technical and population trends, long-established institutional structures and practices, political forces, and social and personal customs and attitudes. An additional factor, racism, is not always the most important one. Therefore, any reduction of deprivation and injustice must involve actions aimed at many things other than racism.

The harmful effects of racism upon American society are immense. These effects are especially injurious to members of certain minority groups, often in ways completely unrecognized by most Americans. Racism worsens the impact upon these minority groups of nearly all the other causal factors listed above. Therefore, no attempts to provide equal opportunities in our society, or to improve conditions among deprived groups, are likely to succeed unless we eliminate *or* counteract racism. Such success will not occur until most Americans—especially whites—understand racism well enough to recognize and counteract its pervasive forms in their own behavior and in the institutions around them.

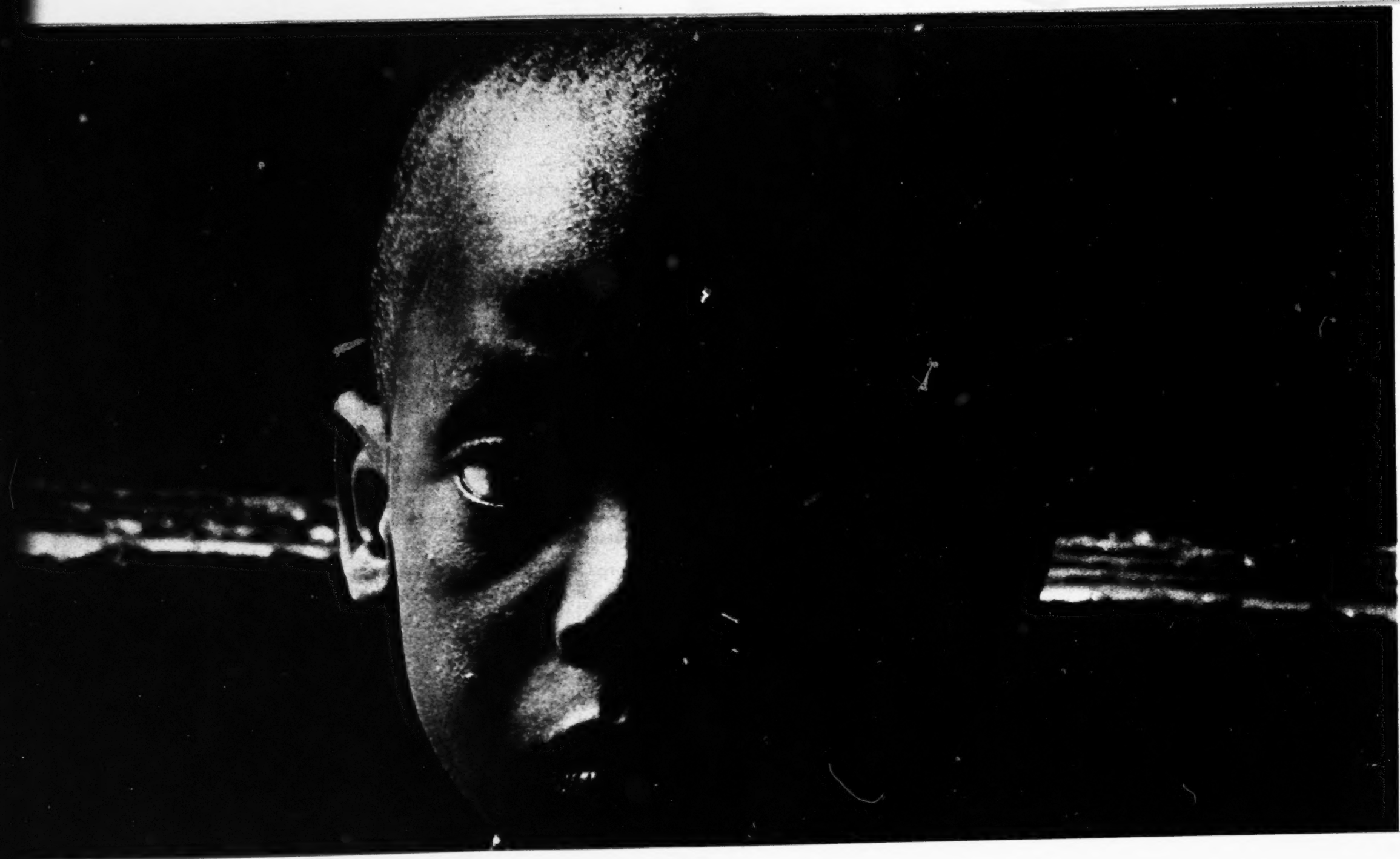
The great significance of racism in American life received dramatic and widely publicized emphasis in the "Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders," in March 1968. Among the most controversial findings in this report are:

What White Americans have never fully understood—but what the Negro can never forget—is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.

Race prejudice has shaped our history decisively in the past; it now threatens to do so again. White racism is essentially responsible for the explosive mixture which has been accumulating in our cities since the end of World War II.

These statements were controversial when they were first made because most white Americans did not believe that they had racist attitudes or that they exhibited racist behavior. After all, most whites are far removed from direct contact with what the National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders called "the ghetto." So they do not see themselves as "deeply implicated" in creating, maintaining, or condoning it. Most of all, they cannot understand why they should be held "responsible for the explosive mixture which has been accumulating in our cities since the end of World War II." The overwhelming majority of whites do not understand how they can be blamed for riots and disorders among people with whom they have very little direct contact, and whose affairs have been—and still are—largely unknown to them.

The National Advisory Commission failed to clarify its accusations by explicitly defining "white racism" in its Report. It did not directly link that term with the many examples of racist institutional practices set forth throughout the Report. These omissions strengthened the initial antagonism of many whites to its findings. Moreover, events since the Commission issued its report have further increased this antagonism, and even caused many whites who at first favored the Commission's findings, to change their views. Yet these same events have made it even more imperative for most Americans to understand the real nature and significance of racism in our society.



What is Racism?

Racism is one of those words that many people use, and feel strongly about, but cannot define very clearly. Those who suffer from racism usually interpret the word one way while others interpret it quite differently. This ambiguity is possible in part because the word refers to ideas that are very complicated and hard to pin down. Yet, before we can fully understand how racism works or how to combat its harmful effects we must first try to define it clearly even though such an attempt may be regarded as wrong by many.

Perhaps the best definition of *racism* is an operational one. This means that it must be based upon the way people actually behave, rather than upon logical consistency or purely scientific ideas. Therefore, racism may be viewed as *any attitude, action, or institutional structure which subordinates a person or group because of his or their color.* Even though "race" and "color" refer to two different kinds of human characteristics, in America it is the visibility of skin color—and of other physical traits associated with particular colors or groups—that marks individuals as "targets" for subordination by members of the white majority. This is true of Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, Japanese Americans, Chinese Americans, and American Indians. Specifically, white racism subordinates members of all these other groups primarily because they are not white in color, even though some are technically considered to be members of the "white race" and even view themselves as "whites."

As a matter of further explanation, racism is not just a matter of attitudes: actions and institutional structures, especially, can also be forms of racism. An "institutional structure" is any well-established, habitual, or widely accepted pattern of action or organizational arrangement, whether formal or informal. For example, the residential segregation of almost all Negroes in large cities is an "institutional structure." So is the widely used practice of denying employment to applicants with any nontraffic police record because this tends to discriminate unfairly against residents of low-income areas where police normally arrest young men for minor incidents that are routinely overlooked in wealthy suburbs.

Just being aware of someone's color or race, or even taking it into account when making decisions or in other behavior, is not necessarily racist. Racism occurs only when these reactions involve some kind of subordination. Thus, pride in one's black heritage, or Irish ancestry, is not necessarily racist.

Racism can occur even if the people causing it have no intention of subordinating others because of color, or are totally unaware of doing so. Admittedly, this implication is sure to be extremely controversial. Most Americans believe racism is bad. But how can anyone be "guilty" of doing something bad when he does not realize he is doing it? Racism can be a matter of *result* rather than *intention* because many institutional structures in America that most whites do not recognize as subordinating others because of color actually injure minority group members far more than deliberate racism.

The separation of races is not racism unless it leads to or involves subordination of one group by another (including subordination of whites by Negroes). Therefore, favoring the voluntary separation of races is not necessarily a form of racism. However, it would become racism if members of one group who wanted to cluster together tried to restrict the locational choices of members of some other group in order to achieve such clustering; for example, if whites tried to discourage Mexican Americans from moving into all-white neighborhoods or if a group of black students forced other black students to live in a specific dormitory. Furthermore, separation of groups is one of the oldest and most widespread devices for subordination in all societies. It is particularly effective in modern urbanized societies because it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to provide different but truly equal opportunities and conditions for separated groups within an economically integrated society.

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Ways White Racism Appears or Works in American Society

White racism exhibits itself in hundreds of ways in American society, and acts in hundreds of other ways that are not recognized by most citizens. Yet all of these can be usefully grouped into two basic categories: *overt racism*, and *indirect institutional subordination because of color*. (For convenience, the second category will be referred to as just *institutional subordination*.)

Overt racism is the use of color *per se* (or other visible characteristics related to color) as a subordinating factor. *Institutional subordination* is placing or keeping persons in a position or status of inferiority by means of attitudes, actions, or institutional structures which do not use color itself as the subordinating mechanism, but instead use other mechanisms indirectly related to color. Institutional subordination is particularly difficult to define clearly in a few words. The very essence of institutional subordination is its indirect nature, which often makes it hard to recognize. Furthermore, there are so many different forms of institutional subordination that it is difficult to include all of them in a single definition. Therefore, these two categories of racism, and the relations between them, can best be clarified by discussing them rather than by further refining their definitions.

Historical Dominance of Overt Racism and Its Results

For more than 300 years, overt racism was a central part of American life, particularly in the South. During these centuries, thousands of overtly racist laws, social institutions, behavior patterns, living conditions, distributions of political power, figures and forms of speech, cultural viewpoints and habits, and even thought patterns continually forced colored Americans* into positions of inferiority and subordination. It took the bloodiest of all American wars to abolish the most terrible form of legal subordination—slavery—just 100 years ago. But many other overtly racist laws and institutions remained in force until well after World War II. These include legally segregated schools, restrictive covenants forbidding nonwhites to live in certain neighborhoods, laws prohibiting interracial marriages, required racial separation of public facilities like bus seats and restaurants, and denial of the right to vote.

In the past two decades, there has been important progress in striking down legal support for most of the forms of overt racism. The actual effects of many such forms of racism have been greatly reduced, too. Moreover, this type of conscious and deliberate subordination by color is now considered wrong by most Americans. As a result, many whites *believe* that overt racism—which is the only form they recognize—is disappearing from America.

*The terms colored and nonwhite in the remainder of this paper refer to Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, Japanese Americans, Chinese Americans, and American Indians because this is how most whites really view and identify them.

Yet hundreds of forms of overt racism remain throughout most of the Nation. Examples are the deliberate exclusion of Negroes, Mexican Americans, and other colored persons from labor unions, law firms, school districts, all-white residential neighborhoods, college fraternities, and private social clubs.

Furthermore, the effects of more than three centuries of overt racism upon both whites and nonwhites cannot be overcome in just a few years. For many generations, millions of Negroes, Mexican Americans, Indians, and other nonwhites have been treated as inferiors, given inferior jobs and legal rights, compelled to accept inferior schooling, forced to live in inferior housing and neighborhoods, made to use inferior public facilities, and constantly told that they were inferior human beings and had no chance to be otherwise. They have been—and still are—systematically excluded from most residential areas, most schools, most jobs, most social privileges, and most political opportunities—particularly the best of all these things. This treatment has inescapably had tremendous effects upon a whole range of conditions among nonwhites in America. These conditions include where they live, their incomes, their self-images and degree of self-confidence, the nature and stability of their families, their attitudes toward authority, their levels of educational and cultural attainment, and their occupational skills. Of course, not all members of each nonwhite minority group have been equally affected by these conditions. Yet, taken as a whole, Americans of color are still severely handicapped by the residual effects of past overt racism—plus the many forms of overt racism that still exist.

Relation of Residual Effects of Overt Racism to Institutional Subordination

The deeply embedded effects of overt white racism will not instantly disappear if the white majority suddenly reduces or even eliminates the use of color as an explicit factor in making decisions or influencing its actions. Many whites now say: "All right, we recognize the injustice of overt racism. So we will stop using color as a factor in making decisions. Instead we will use other factors which are clearly and reasonably related to the activities and privileges concerned." Examples of these other factors used in making decisions are skill levels in relation to jobs, place of residence in relation to school attendance, ability to score well on entrance examinations in relation to higher education, self-confidence and leadership of whites in relation to job promotions, and savings plus present income in relation to buying homes.

Usually, the use of such factors is free from overt racism. Hence, it constitutes great progress in relation to most of American history. Thus, most civil rights organizations have argued for years in favor of "merit employment" based upon skill and ability without regard to race or color. And achievement of true "merit employment" regarding hiring, promotion, wages, and salaries would be a great advance in most firms. Therefore, whites who succeed in this achievement can rightly feel proud of eliminating an important form of overt racism from their behavior.

Nevertheless, even "merit employment" programs can conceal many forms of indirect institutional subordination by color. In fact, we can use the example of such programs to illustrate how present elimination of overtly racist action does *not* destroy or even significantly weaken the continuing racist effects of *past* overtly racist behavior. This can occur because many of those effects are embedded in institutional structures that no longer appear related to race or color.

Consider an employer who needs workers to fill certain jobs that demand advanced carpentry skills. Naturally, he requires that applicants have such skills in order to be hired. But what if the local carpenters' union excludes all Negroes and Mexi-

can Americans as members? Then this very reasonable behavior of the employer has racist effects because of overt racism of another organization upon which he relies to carry out his own activities. Or what if unions accept minority group apprentices specially trained in local high schools, but the only high schools providing such training are in all-white neighborhoods, either too far from minority group neighborhoods for convenient attendance, or far enough to be placed in different school districts because all school district boundaries are based upon the "neighborhood promixity" principle? In this case, no decision-makers are using overtly racist principles. Yet the result clearly continues systematic subordination of minority groups by excluding them from important economic opportunities. Returning to the example, assume that the employer saves money by never advertising available job openings. Instead, he relies solely upon word-of-mouth communications from his present employees to their friends to find applicants—but all his present employees are white. This is an extremely widespread practice, since most workers find their jobs by hearing of openings from friends. Yet it has the effect of excluding nearly all minority group members from consideration for available jobs. Because of past overt racism, most whites have mainly white friends, particularly since they live in all-white neighborhoods.

Again, the employer is taking actions which are not overtly racist in either nature or intent—but which nevertheless have racist effects—that is, they subordinate people because of their color. In this case, these effects occur because the seemingly reasonable and "unbiased" behavior of the employer takes place in an institutional context that still contains profoundly racist elements remaining from three centuries of overt racism. If the employer had carefully examined his recruiting practices to see whether he was giving members of all groups an equal chance to compete for his jobs, he might have discovered this situation. But he was not engaging in any overtly racist behavior; so it never occurred to him that his customary practices might have indirect racist effects because of institutional subordination.

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'Invisibility' of Much Institutional Subordination

This "invisibility" of institutional subordination is even more striking concerning those forms which result from *geographic exclusion* of minority group members from all-white areas, or *perceptual distortion* in the way people see reality. Overt racism—both past and present—is the main cause of the special separation of where most whites live from where most nonwhite minorities live. The major form of such racism is deliberate discouragement of Negro and other nonwhite families from buying or renting homes in all-white neighborhoods. Such discouragement is systematically practiced by white realtors, renting agents, landlords, and homeowners. This clearly racist behavior has become so well entrenched that many minority group members no longer even try to find homes in all-white areas because they fear they will "get the run-around" or receive hostile treatment from at least some neighbors. So the pattern of exclusion is continued—in spite of recent laws and court decisions to the contrary.

Yet dozens of other forms of institutional subordination are indirectly caused by the absence of nonwhites from white residential areas. For example, most new jobs are being created in suburban shopping centers, industrial parks, new office buildings, and schools or universities. But American suburban areas are overwhelmingly white in population (about 95 percent in 1966). So the suburban sources of new employment are usually far from where nonwhites live. This makes it very difficult for the latter to know when such job openings exist, to get transportation to look for them, and to commute to work once they are found. Even if they do get jobs in the suburbs, they have great difficulty finding housing near their work. This difficulty does not result only from overt racism: it is also caused by zoning laws which deliberately discourage any housing serving relatively lower-income groups, or local actions which prevent use of Federal subsidies for such housing. Such laws are usually defended on grounds of "maintaining high community standards" of housing and open space, or protecting the existing residents from tax increases that would be caused by building more schools to serve new low-income residents.

All these conditions discourage minority group members from even trying to get suburban jobs. This perpetuates their exclusion from all-white suburban areas. Yet many of the best quality schools, housing developments, recreational facilities, and general residential environments are found in the suburbs. So most minority group members find themselves cut off not only from the fastest growing sources of new jobs, but also from many of the best amenities in American society. This is clearly racism or "institutional subordination."

Moreover, this exclusion is accomplished by very few acts of overt racism carried out by a small number of people—supplemented by thousands of acts of indirect institutional subordination carried out by millions of white suburbanites. But most of the latter are completely unaware of the subordinating nature of their behavior. In fact, many sincerely avoid any actions they believe are overtly racist. That is why so many whites become righteously indignant at the claim that American society is "racist." They have carefully purged their own actions of overtly racist behavior, and they sincerely believe their own communities "have no race problems" because there are practically no minority group members there. The institutionally subordinating nature of the processes that cause this exclusion remain completely hidden from them.

This invisibility of institutional subordination occurs in part because minority group members themselves are "invisible" in the normal lives of most white Americans—especially white children. Most white children are brought up in neighborhoods where Negroes, Mexican Americans, and other nonwhite persons are totally absent, or constitute an extremely small minority—usually engaged in menial jobs. These children form an unconscious but deeply rooted mental image of "normal" society as consisting only of white people, and of all colored persons as "strange" and "different" from "normal people." This image is further reinforced by the world they see on television. Until very recently, "normal" American society as depicted by television programs contained few Negroes, Indians, Mexican Americans, or other nonwhites in positive or realistic roles. Members of these groups were seen only as villains, or professional athletes, or entertainers, or servants, or on newscasts engaged in crime or violence. Recent introduction of many more Negroes into television commercials and some major roles is certainly an improvement. But television still depicts a largely segregated society, especially in the situation shows and cartoons which children watch—and particularly regarding such minority groups as Puerto Ricans and Indians. Moreover, this perception of whites as the only "normal Americans" was further reinforced for more than 100 years by the elementary and other textbooks used in almost all American schools. The exclusion of minority group members from such texts is one more way in which millions of Americans were—and still are—made both "invisible" and "strange" in the minds of the white majority.

The same distortions in perception that make whites unconsciously feel "normal" and superior in relation to nonwhite persons have exactly the opposite effects upon the latter. Most colored children also group in neighborhoods where they meet few people not in their own ethnic group. However, they learn from adults who must deal with whites that people in their own group have relatively little power and status in society. Television has devastatingly confirmed this impression because the world of "normal Americans" they see on the screen almost totally excludes them, or shows them mainly in inferior or marginal roles. School textbooks and other educational materials further confirm this view. It is, therefore, not surprising that many members of nonwhite groups unconsciously come to believe that perhaps they really *are* inferior. Otherwise, how can the pictures of reality which society shows them be explained? But once a person begins to believe he is inferior, he starts losing confidence in his ability to overcome any obstacles he may run into. This often causes him to reduce his efforts when confronted by such obstacles—which in turn produces failures that confirm his feelings of inferiority. So his subordination is not only perpetuated, but becomes justified in the eyes of others by his behavior.* Thus, geographic exclusion of nonwhites by whites, plus perceptual distortions in white-controlled mass media, combine to produce largely unrecognized psychological and behavioral effects upon both groups. These effects perpetuate the institutional subordination of nonwhites because of their color.

*The key idea of "Black Nationalism" is precisely to reverse this process by generating pride in being Black, instead of feelings of inferiority. Such pride is designed to lead to greater self-respect and self-confidence—and, therefore, to more success in overcoming obstacles. This in turn is supposed to reinforce self-confidence and reaffirm initial pride in being Black. "Black Nationalism" and "Black Power" seek to create a positive counter-identity to offset the negative "loss of identity" felt by Negroes as a result of the forces described above.

RESPECT

The pervasive nature of institutional subordination, and its continuance over long periods, is illustrated by the Negro quest for good quality education in American public schools. Obtaining quality educations for their children is a central concern of all American parents. But among Negro parents, this desire has been continuously thwarted by a series of white-dominated institutions. Each time Negroes overcome or bypass the obstacles posed by one such institution, another blocks them with some new form of subordination.

As late as the 1940's, Negroes tried to get good quality schooling within the legally segregated separate school systems which then prevailed. But experience proved that the education their children received was definitely inferior in quality to that received by whites. For example, the few Negroes who managed to complete college in this inferior system discovered they could not earn incomes even as high as those of white high school graduates, both because their training was inferior and because of discrimination in hiring.

In response, Negro civil rights organizations launched a long legal battle for racial integration in the public schools so they could share in the good quality education received by whites. The legal struggle was finally won in the Supreme Court's monumental 1954 decision striking down segregation. But then they found themselves confronted by a whole new series of white maneuvers and institutions preventing meaningful integration. In the South, most areas simply ignored the Supreme Court's command to integrate schools. Other areas engaged in token integration of just a few students, or devised "voluntary selection" schemes that nullified integration. As of 1966—*12 years* after the Supreme Court decision—the proportions of Negro elementary and secondary school students in schools with white students were 4.4 percent in Alabama, 8.8 percent in Georgia, 3.4 percent in Louisiana, 2.5 percent in Mississippi, and 5.6 percent in South Carolina. In only four of the 11 Southern States was this fraction more than 16 percent. However, it was more than 75 percent in five of the seven border States. So the strikingly low fractions in the Deep South unquestionably resulted from deliberate white policy rather than any necessity stemming from high proportions of Negroes in the total population.

Northern white resistance to school integration was also strong, but it employed different forms of institutional subordination. Overtly racist practices in real estate markets strongly discourage Negroes from moving into most all-white neighborhoods in order to gain access to the better schools serving those neighborhoods. So Negro residential expansion necessarily remains focused on areas near the edge of massive all-Negro concentrations. But as soon as Negroes begin moving into all-white areas, white residents cease moving in. Eventually, most whites withdraw, causing the neighborhood to become rapidly almost entirely Negro. This *de facto* residential segregation was linked to school segregation by the neighborhood school principle—that is, the concept of having all children attend schools near their homes.

To cope with this form of *institutional subordination,* Negroes proposed busing students from where they lived to schools in other areas so as to achieve racially mixed student bodies in each school. This idea evoked two hostile responses from many of the white parents whose children were concerned. The first was an even stronger defense of the neighborhood school principle. This principle had originated mainly for convenience reasons, but now formed a useful instrument for continued institutional subordination. The second was opposition to *all* busing of students as inherently undesirable because of delays, child fatigue, added costs, and other ostensibly "technical" reasons. White parents even opposed schemes that did not move their own children, but involved only the busing of Negro children from overcrowded all-Negro schools to underutilized all-white schools. *Such opposition to all busing as undesirable is clearly racist in nature.* This is

indicated by the high proportion of white students in rural areas, suburbs, and Catholic big-city school systems who have used buses for years to get to school—and still use them—without arousing any such complaints. Yet white opposition to publicly supported busing schemes aimed at integrating schools has effectively stymied this route to improved educational quality for Negro children. It is one form of the adamant white refusal to integrate that is driving most Negroes to abandon integration as a goal, and instead turn to Black Nationalism.

Still searching for ways to improve the quality of education received by their children, Negro parents and educators have now begun emphasizing the idea of community control over public schools. Recent statistical evidence proves conclusively that present school systems in our largest cities are failing to provide equal or even minimally decent educational opportunity to most Negro students. So Negroes in some cities have urged that local school boards be set up in each neighborhood or group of neighborhoods with real power over the schools in each area vested in such school boards. These school boards would be dominated by members of the minority group living in the area and providing most of the students in its schools. Hopefully, such local minority group members will be far more sensitive to the educational needs of their own children than the professionals in giant citywide school bureaucracies have proved to be. Moreover, having Negro children realize that their schools are controlled by black people might add to their self-respect and sense of control over their own destinies. This could markedly improve their attitude toward learning, thereby raising their achievement levels. Finally, creating closer links between local schools and parents may affect the encouragement toward education which children receive in their homes. The whole concept of local community control is new within large cities. Therefore, whether these hoped-for benefits will actually result cannot be evaluated until this concept has been tried out in practice. However, it does not differ very much from the idea of local control of schools already used throughout most of white suburban America.

But this latest attempt by Negroes to achieve good quality schools is already

facing mounting opposition from several white-dominated institutions. Professional educators who control big city school bureaucracies claim such decentralization may result in *lower* quality education because of lack of professional skill and training by those who would then control schools. Teachers' unions seem ready to fight delegation of any authority over their members to local groups more likely to insist on evaluating teacher performance than professional administrators do now. This battle is so bitter that it closed the giant New York City public school system for many weeks. And similar opposition seems likely in other big cities where decentralization is being seriously considered.

This series of moves by Negroes seeking to give their children a decent education, and countermoves by white institutions preventing this desirable outcome, clearly illustrate why so many nonwhite Americans believe our society is permeated with racist institutions. No matter what course Negro parents have pursued, their efforts have been frustrated by white-controlled institutions using a wide variety of arguments and tactics. The result is always a refusal to allow Negroes either equal access to good quality white schools, or control over the schools to which they have been relegated. On the one hand, they are compelled to use predominantly Negro schools by the neighborhood school principle; but on the other hand, they are prevented from applying the same principle to control over those schools so they can try to improve them.

No doubt there is often some truth in the "technical" arguments used by white-dominated institutions to oppose each attempt by nonwhites to improve their childrens' education. But the same dual denial of either equal access to white facilities or self-control over the inferior facilities relegated to nonwhites exists in many other spheres—such as housing and politics. It is no wonder that nonwhites now look past the "purely technical" arguments advanced by whites to support each set of tactics, and instead see the terribly frustrating underlying pattern of institutional subordination. It is time that all Americans saw it—and attacked it vigorously.

Summary of How Institutional Subordination Works

The above discussion illustrates how institutional subordination constantly produces racist effects from actions which are usually *not* overtly racist in either content or intention. This type of transformation occurs whenever apparently nonracist actions are:

a. Directly linked to other actions that are overtly racist (such as basing employment policies on acceptance of unions that deliberately exclude Negro members).

b. Heavily reliant upon personal qualifications or skills which minority group members have not been permitted to achieve because of past overt racism (such as requiring passage of academically oriented tests for getting a job, or basing early ability groupings of children in public schools on tests administered only in English in areas where many children have been reared in Spanish-speaking homes).

c. Dependent upon institutional arrangements which embody the residual results of past overt racism (such as policies—like the neighborhood school policy—which mainly benefit persons living near facilities in all-white neighborhoods).

d. Likely to perpetuate any of the three causal factors cited above—that is, overt racism, low achievement among minority groups of key skills or traits, or residual institutional arrangements from past overt racism (as distortions of reality in mass media and textbooks do).

These relationships between seemingly nonracist actions and other actions or institutions which involve either present or past overt racism are rarely recognized by most whites. They see only the nonracist actions in themselves, not the institutional context in which they are embedded. Moreover, there are almost always "sound" economic or other reasons why these seemingly nonracist actions—and all the institutional structures surrounding them—have been adopted. But such "soundness" has been calculated from the unconsciously restricted "white only" viewpoint that most Americans have been absorbing since birth. This viewpoint is simply not aware of the impacts of any action upon Mexican Americans, Indians, Negroes, or other colored groups. So it normally does not consider such impacts at all in deciding whether or not any given action is desirable. In recent years, more whites have become conscious of overt racism. Yet they still do not realize how many of their everyday actions continue to indirectly subordinate minority group members in the ways described above.

Is Institutional Subordination Really 'Racist'?

If institutional subordination is one of two basic types of racism, should people who engage in it be considered "racist," even if they do not realize the effects of their actions? How can someone be guilty of racism when he does not realize that his actions have racist effects? After all, guilt is a matter of intention as much as effect.

There are several reasons why it would be both wrong and harmful to consider persons who support institutional subordination as "racists" in the same sense as those who practice overt racism. For one thing, many actions which involve institutional subordination seem perfectly fair, reasonable, and "unbiased" to most Americans. An example is adoption of "merit employment." Accusing people who follow this policy and others like it of being "racists" contradicts commonsense—as well as the longstanding policy of many civil rights groups. Moreover, such accusations might simply infuriate persons who were sincerely trying to eliminate overt racism from their lives. Their outrage at this seemingly unjustified insult might blind them to any understanding of institutional subordination at all. The proper ways of offsetting institutional subordination may not require changes in the policies of some of the people who cause it. For example, the way to get rid of the subordinating impacts of "merit employment" is certainly not to have all employers put unqualified workers in every job. Rather it is to eliminate unfair union practices or have society as a whole pay for extra training for certain workers, etc. So what good would it do to make supporters of "merit employment" feel guilty about a policy that was actually producing many benefits, merely because it also produced costs which they could not remove themselves anyway? Finally, almost every white American supports some form of institutional subordination. Therefore, we might remove nearly all significant meaning from the term—or cause many people to reject our whole analysis—for they *know* they are not "racists" in the overt sense.

On the other hand, most white Americans *are* causing impacts upon Negroes, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Indians, and other colored Americans that unfairly subordinate the latter. To this extent, they are all "unintentional racists," even though they are certainly not guilty of the same kind of deliberate injustice as those who practice overt racism.

How Racism Provides Benefits to Whites

American racism probably originated in slavery, the most extreme form of subordination by color. That type of racism, and all other later types, came into being mainly because subordination of colored people provides definite benefits to those who do the subordinating. In fact, overt racism persists mainly because it still yields significant psychological, economic, and political advantages to millions of white Americans—and even to a few nonwhites.

Successful efforts to combat racism will necessarily reduce or eliminate these benefits, thereby imposing a significant cost upon people who now enjoy them. That is why attempts to combat racism have been so strongly resisted. Moreover, such resistance is far more widespread than most people realize because so many whites receive significant but only dimly realized benefits from the subordination of nonwhites. Even many whites who sincerely abhor racism in principle, and openly combat overt racism, sometimes find themselves resisting clearly antiracist actions for "intuitive" reasons they do not fully understand. This usually means such antiracist actions threaten to reduce certain almost subconsciously perceived psychological benefits these whites have been gaining from living in a society where they are considered members of a "superior" group.

A necessary step in weakening this widespread but unexpressed support for racism is clearly identifying the benefits which whites receive from continued subordination of colored people. True, some whites will still resist losing these benefits even after they realize that such benefits result from unjust subordination. But, hopefully, many whites who are opposed to overt racism in principle will begin to see how they have been profiting unawares from either overt racism or institutional subordination or both—and will therefore begin supporting the antiracist strategies set forth later in this analysis.

Economic Benefits Derived from Racism

Overt racism and institutional subordination provide the following economic benefits to a significant number of whites:

1. Reduction of competition by excluding members of certain groups from access to benefits, privileges, jobs, or other opportunities or markets. The ability to easily identify members of the subordinated group by sight is a key factor linking such reduction of competition to color. An example is the refusal of many hospital medical staffs to accept Negro or Mexican American doctors as staff members.

2. Exploitation of members of the subordinated groups through lower wages, higher prices, higher rents, less desirable credit terms, or poorer working or living conditions than those received by whites. Where racial or color discrimination *per se* is illegal, such exploitation probably cannot be effectively carried out unless the subordinated groups are spatially segregated from the white majority. Then differentials in wages, prices, credit terms, and other policies actually based upon color can be more easily concealed and even rationalized as based upon geographic differences.

3. Avoidance of certain undesirable or "dead-end" jobs (like garbage collection) by creating economically depressed racial or ethnic groups which will be compelled by necessity to carry out those jobs, even though their potential skill levels are equal to those of other groups.

Political Benefits Derived from Racism

All the political benefits of racism involve receipt by whites of a disproportionate share of the advantages which arise from political control over government. Their share is disproportionate because they prevent nonwhites from receiving what the latter would get if true political equality prevailed. The benefits of political control over government include ability to control government actions and policies as well as jobs. Therefore, political racism is an extremely important device for maintaining other forms of racism.

The main ways political racism occur are as follows:

1. Manipulation of potential nonwhite voters in order to maintain exclusive white control over an entire governmental structure (such as a county government in the South), or some portion of such a structure (such as a ward in a northern city), which would be controlled by nonwhites if all citizens enjoyed equal voting rights, since nonwhites are a majority of the potential electorate in that area.

2. Manipulation of political district boundaries or governmental structures by whites so as to minimize the ability of nonwhite voters to elect representatives sensitive to their needs. This includes "gerrymandering" congressional districts, creating "at-large" electoral systems in big cities with significant nonwhite minorities, and shifting to metropolitanwide government when nonwhites appear likely to constitute a majority of voters in a central city.

3. Exclusion of nonwhites from a proportionate share—or any share—of government jobs, contracts, and other disbursements through the decisions of white administrative officials.

4. Maintenance of the support of nonwhite voters by either white or nonwhite politicians who fail to provide reciprocal government policy benefits and other advantages to the same degree as for white groups in the electorate. This can occur when nonwhites as a group feel themselves too subordinated in general to demand such benefits, when competitive parties are somehow excluded from effective operation in all-nonwhite areas, or when voters are so poor they can be influenced by small monetary rewards and favors.

5. Voter refusal to support a politician who is clearly superior to his opponent merely because he is not a member of the same racial or color group as the voters themselves and his opponent is. This kind of racism can also occur among nonwhite voters in relation to a white politician. Even though basing votes on group solidarity is a long established American tradition, it must be considered racist if it subordinates any candidate solely because of his race, color, or ethnic background.

Psychological Benefits Derived from Racism

Both overt racism and institutional subordination provide the following psychological benefits to many whites in America:

1. Creation of feelings of superiority in comparison to nonwhites. These feelings are extremely widespread among whites, though not always openly expressed or even consciously recognized. Hence it is important to examine their true implications. All whites who gain ego support from feeling superior to nonwhites

basically believe that nonwhites are somehow inherently or biologically inferior because of their color. This is the "purest" form of racism. It is so blatantly "un-American" that few whites will admit they believe it—or even consciously accept it. Yet all whites who feel the least bit superior to nonwhites as persons—in contrast to believing they live in *environmental surroundings* superior to those of nonwhites—basically adopt such a "pure" racist viewpoint. This is true because the obviously inferior economic, political, and social *status* of nonwhites can result from only two factors. Either nonwhites *are* inferior as persons, or white racism has prevented their natural equality with whites from asserting itself in actual attainments during their more than 300 years in America. Therefore, whites who deny that overt racism and institutional subordination are essentially responsible for the currently lower status of nonwhite groups are basically implying that those groups are biologically or otherwise inherently inferior.

2. Suppression in oneself or one's group of certain normal traits which are regarded as undesirable. This is accomplished by projecting an exaggerated image of those traits and "legitimizing" attacks upon them. For example, many American whites unjustly accuse Negroes of laziness, sexual promiscuity, and general irresponsibility. These are exaggerated versions of normal human impulses. But they happen to be the very impulses which the Puritan ethic, long dominant in America, seeks to suppress in favor of extreme industry, sexual purity, and individual self-reliance.

3. Promotion of solidarity and reduced tension among white nationality and social class groups. Racism enables them to focus the inevitable hostilities and antagonisms which arise in modern life upon the subordinated colored groups, and to identify themselves together in contrast to those groups.

4. Avoiding the necessity of adopting difficult or costly policies to solve key social problems by falsely blaming those problems upon "immoral behavior" by members of the subordinated groups. For example, many whites erroneously blame unemployment and high welfare costs upon laziness and sexual promiscuity among Negroes. In reality, more than three-fourths of all unemployed persons are white, most persons on welfare are white, and more than 90 percent of all persons on welfare are incapable of supporting themselves because they are either too old, disabled, children, or mothers who must care for children. By falsely converting these problems into "the results of sin," such scapegoating provides a moral excuse for relatively affluent whites to reduce their economic support for the unemployed and the dependent poor without feeling guilty about doing so.

5. Diverting one's own energies from maximum self-improvement efforts by claiming that white racism makes any significant self-help attempts by colored people ineffective and useless. Such "reverse scapegoating" occurs—often unconsciously—among many minority group members. It is possible only because white racism *does* seriously inhibit—though not entirely nullify—nonwhite self-improvement efforts. This phenomenon can lead to two opposite results: excessive apathy or suicidal violence. Thus, by helping to create such "reverse scapegoating," white racism encourages some nonwhites to exhibit two of the very characteristics—"laziness" and tendencies toward violence—that it often falsely attributes to all nonwhites.

Reinforcement of Racism Because of Heightened Anxieties in Modern Society

Recent events have emphasized the rising level of tensions, anxieties, and other psychologically threatening factors in modern American life. These things result from a combination of rapid technological change; high economic productivity; instant and universal communication of problems; dissent and prevailing affluence through television; and the inertia and rigidities of legal and social institutions. The ways in which these basic causes interact are too complex to explore fully here. But their net effect is to heighten the needs of many whites for precisely the kinds of psychological benefits that racism provides.

For example, television has focused great attention recently upon the new lifestyle espoused by "hippies." This style features drugs, hostility toward authority, sexual freedom, unorthodox styles of dress, rejection of work as a central value, and willingness to engage in violent protests and demonstrations. These traits pose powerful psychological threats to many Americans. They are a direct threat because they imply that the values upon which most middle class families have built their lives are really worthless. Moreover, "hippie" values also threaten to "seduce" middle class children, causing profound cleavages between them and their parents. These values are also an indirect threat because they appeal to the suppressed desire of every normal person to engage in such activities to some degree. Thus, they may weaken the adherence of middle class citizens to their existing values.

Such psychological threats are bound to produce anxieties—both conscious and unconscious—among many of the middle class Americans who form the vast majority of our population. One way to cope with such heightened anxiety is to lean more heavily upon the psychological benefits which can be derived from racism. This can take the form of more vociferously blaming social problems upon minority groups, or projecting traits one wants to suppress in oneself upon members of such groups, or gaining feelings of solidarity with other whites by uniting in greater antagonism against nonwhites, or emphasizing the inferiority of others so as to reassure oneself about one's own worth. Consequently, powerful recent trends in American life may be significantly increasing the dependence of many whites upon the psychological benefits they derive from racism, whether consciously or unconsciously. Unless the anxieties caused by these trends can be alleviated in other ways, it may be increasingly difficult to get these whites to give up such benefits. This suggests that antiracism strategies must include, or be linked to, policies that will help reduce the threatening nature of these recent trends to the white middle class.

The fact that overt racism and institutional subordination produce benefits for many whites does not mean that these benefits outweigh the costs of racism. In the first place, such benefits are wholly illegitimate, since they spring from an unjust subordination of others. Second, creation of these benefits imposes immense costs upon millions of nonwhite Americans. Finally, by preventing nonwhites from developing their maximum productive potential, racism also inhibits them from creating much greater economic, social, and cultural wealth than they do now. This makes all of society poorer than it would be without racism—including the very people who benefit from racist behavior and institutions.

Basic Strategies for Combating Racism

Racism in America is extremely complex and deep-rooted. Consequently, only an equally complex and profound set of actions can possibly eliminate or counteract it effectively. Summarized under eight basic headings, each of the kinds of actions involved describes a basic strategy which aims at one or both of two essential objectives: *changing the behavior of whites* so they will no longer consciously or unconsciously support racism; and *increasing the capabilities of nonwhite groups* so they can overcome the handicaps racism imposes.

The nin_{ie} basic strategies can be briefly summarized as follows:

1. *Make all Americans—especially whites—far more conscious of the widespread existence of racism in all its forms, and the immense costs it imposes on the entire Nation.* Most whites are completely unaware of the many kinds of institutional subordination they themselves support. A crucial task facing those who wish to combat racism is converting this "blindness" into acute consciousness of the many unrecognized ways in which white attitudes, behavior, and institutional structures continue to subordinate minority groups.

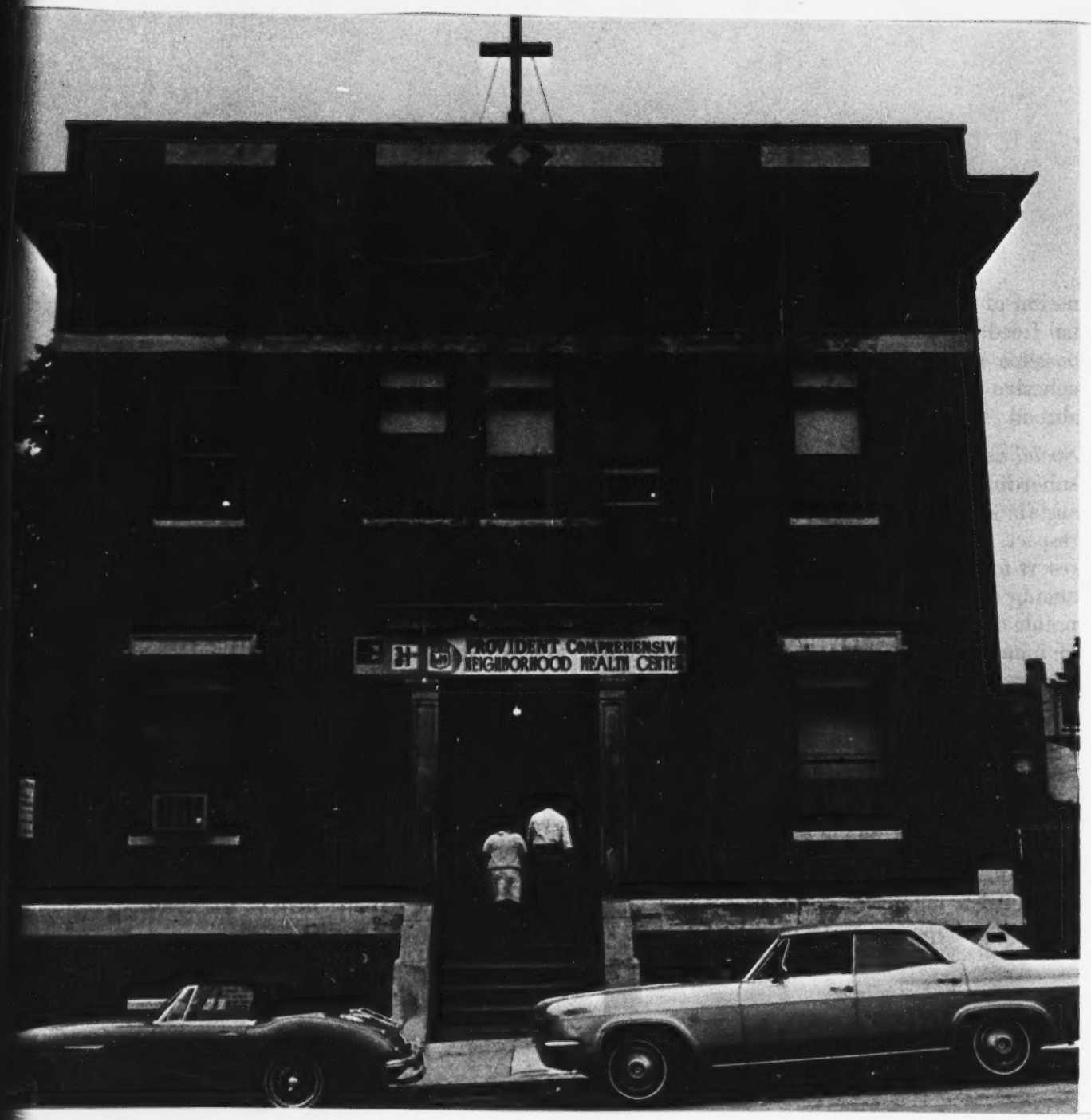
Economic costs, including the loss of national output due to holding minority group members below their maximum productive potential, the loss of markets because the incomes of these groups are kept low by institutional subordination, and large social costs of policies aimed at remedying conditions partly caused by subordination, such as poverty, crime, poor housing, and poor health.

Political costs resulting from tensions in national life caused by unjust subordination of minority groups. These include civil disorders, restrictions of individual freedoms and rights, tendencies toward a weakening of the two-party system, possible rising difficulty in gathering sufficient congressional support for *any* cohesive set of national policies, and decreasing respect for the United States abroad.

Social and human costs caused by the loss of human potential due to institutional subordination, and by the distortion of values in the white majority necessary to sustain such subordination. The first kind of costs includes loss of personal self-respect, weakened family stability, widespread frustration and apathy, frequent resort to narcotics and criminal behavior, and a declining respect for authority among minority groups. The second kind includes excessive narrowness of viewpoint; defensiveness and hostility feelings; resistance to constructive change; lack of human sensitivity; and overly technological (rather than humane) orientation of social policies and activities.

It is impossible to quantify these costs in this analysis. But some future attempts should be made to measure at least the economic costs so as to show what giant losses are involved. For example, in 1965, if Negro families had received the same average income as whites, incomes received by all U.S. families would have been $15.7 billion higher.

The process of education necessary to change white perceptions will never work if it consists mainly of some people "lecturing" others. Rather, it must involve intense participation by two types of people. First, various groups of whites must



thoroughly examine their own behavior in order to uncover all the subtle and unconscious forms of racism embedded in it. This should be done by teachers concerning schools, by property managers and realtors concerning real estate practices, by personnel directors concerning employment practices, etc.

Second, whites must overcome their habitual exclusion of Negroes and other minority group members in this process of self-examination. Whites, themselves, are not likely to discover all the forms of subordination they impose on others without the help of the latter. This may require planned confrontation of whites by Negroes or others who deliberately take an accusing posture, or simply insightful advice from well informed members of minority groups. But, in any case, unless white self-examination incorporates significant contributions from nonwhites, it will embody a form of racism in itself.

2. *Build up the capabilities of minority group members, and greatly strengthen their opportunities and power to exercise those capabilities, especially regarding public and private activities that directly affect them.* This strategy embodies one of the ultimate objectives of all the others: enabling presently subordinated groups both to achieve and to exercise their maximum potential. The capabilities and opportunities concerned therefore include all types: economic, political, social, aesthetic, and cultural. It is especially crucial to provide Negroes and other minority group members with direct experience and power in designing, running, and evaluating both public and private programs and activities in their own neighborhoods. This will not only enhance the capabilities of many deprived minority group members, but also permit many others who already have such capabilities to demonstrate their skills and competence both to themselves and to the Nation as a whole.

Four key observations are relevant to this strategy:

a. *An essential ingredient is expressing strong political support for key national policies concerning housing, education, civil rights, employment, welfare programs, tax reforms, and other measures with antiracist effects.* Many problems associated with racism cannot be effectively solved, or even attacked, by local or State governments. They are inhibited by lack of financial resources within their boundaries, or competitive pressures from other cities or States which force them to keep taxes down. Older central cities containing large Negro, Puerto Rican, or Mexican American minorities are especially incapable of supporting effective antiracism policies by themselves. The concentration within their boundaries of low-income groups requiring expensive services, and the shift of most new growth to suburbs, cause them to sustain rapidly rising costs while their real property tax bases stagnate or decline. Only the use of nationwide taxing powers can effectively shift resources from wealthier areas to where the problems associated with racism are now most concentrated.

Yet Congress has been reluctant to launch many of the programs suggested by the National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders. So far, its members have perceived very little support for such programs among their white constituents. *Until such white political support is both created and forcefully expressed to Congressional representatives, no effective nationwide attack on racism is possible.* Because the white middle class constitutes a large majority of the American electorate, no significant Federal programs can possibly be adopted unless they are supported by a great many Congressional representatives of that group. Therefore, however tiresome and unexciting it may seem, keeping informed about national legislation and writing one's local Congressman to support appropriate measures comprise an essential strategy for combating racism. Equally

significant is persuading other citizens—especially whites in areas where few nonwhites live—to do likewise.

b. *In primarily Negro areas, this strategy is closely related to the concepts of "Black Power" and "Black Nationalism," but it need not involve support of geographic separatism.* Undoubtedly, one effective way to build up capabilities quickly among the most deprived members of the black population, and to enhance the self-respect of the already capable members, is for Negroes to dominate most public and private activities in predominantly Negro neighborhoods. This includes the design as well as the execution of such programs. It also might involve voluntary transfer of many white-owned stores and firms in all-Negro areas to black ownership through some type of purchase plans, or creation of new black-owned facilities there.

These and other Negro economic resources can be generated fastest if most Negroes deliberately direct their consumer trade and other business to Negro-operated stores, banks, service firms, professional firms, restaurants, etc. Clearly, such behavior involves taking race and color into account in making decisions; hence some might consider it "black racism." But it can be more accurately viewed as a form of "black pride" analogous to the nationality-conscious behavior of many Irish, Italian, Polish, German, Czech, Jewish, and other citizens in earlier periods—which still persists in some cities. This kind of selective patronage is really a nonsubordinating exercise of free choice by Negroes in an essentially white-dominated society. Therefore, even though it certainly involves discrimination by color, it is not truly a "reverse" version of the white racism that institutionally subordinates so many nonwhites.

c. *One important device for developing Negro and other minority group business capabilities is the "third-party contract" for providing both public and private services.* For instance, if expanded government services concerning neighborhood maintenance were to be carried out, the local government could contract that function in mainly Negro areas to a Negro-owned and operated firm organized for that purpose, rather than enlarging the government itself. An example is PRIDE, Inc., in Washington, D.C. Similarly, white-owned firms procuring or providing services in mainly Negro areas should make every effort to use Negro-owned and operated firms, or Negro franchise operators, as intermediaries between them and their final customers. In some cases, it will take major efforts by the white firms concerned to help minority group members organize new firms and manage them successfully. These efforts are a key input which whites can contribute to the success of this basic strategy.

d. *One of the objectives of this basic strategy is to equip Negroes and other minority group leaders with much greater bargaining power in dealing with whites.* This would enable such leaders to more successfully persuade whites to carry out some of the institutional and behavioral changes necessary to eliminate racism. For example, a Negro mayor of a large city who can form a coalition with Negro councilmen to control local property tax rates is in a strong position to influence white-dominated employers there to alter discriminatory hiring practices. Similarly, a Mexican American dominated union of hospital workers might be able to persuade all hospitals to adopt nondiscriminatory policies toward Mexican Americans and other doctors and patients. Thus, *the more successful this strategy is in building Negro and other minority group capabilities, the more likely it is that conflicts will arise between these minorities and some or all of the white majority.* Consequently this strategy embodies significant risks of at least temporarily "back-firing" and generating antiminority sentiments. Whites who support this strategy should be well aware of these risks, and prepared to counteract such sentiment in themselves as well as others. Yet no efforts to combat racism in America can succeed without greatly building up the capabilities of presently subordinated minorities and actually transferring significant power to

them, since prevention of such outcomes is the essence of racism.

3. *Develop legislative and other programs which simultaneously provide benefits for significant parts of the white majority and for deprived or other members of nonwhite minority groups, so it will be in the immediate self-interest of the former to support programs which aid the latter.* Publicly supported programs which benefit the most deprived persons in society, regardless of color, often have difficulty obtaining vital white middle class support. An example is the Federal anti-poverty program. Such programs provide benefits for a minority of the population by imposing taxes or inflation on the remaining majority. In reality, there are significant long-run benefits to the majority in thus aiding the minority. But these more distant benefits are not always obvious; whereas the immediate costs are clear. The same thing is true of programs which primarily benefit Negroes or other ethnic minorities, such as housing programs concentrated in ghetto areas.

(Actually, almost all public programs—including public housing and welfare—mainly benefit whites, but many whites do not realize this.) Consequently, major programs benefiting *any* group which is a minority of the population—whether ethnically or economically or in any other way—would have a much better chance of gaining the necessary political support if they also provided benefits for many members of the large white middle class majority. For instance, it might be easier to get Congress to aid poor female-headed households with children by passing a family allowance that assisted *all* families with children than by expanding welfare payments that assisted only the poorest such families.

This strategy seems especially significant now because of the apparent discontent of the "silent majority" comprised of lower-middle-income and middle-income whites. Recent political developments indicate that millions of these white Americans believe public programs in the past few years have unduly focused upon the problems of ethnic minority groups and the poor. Regardless of whether or not this belief is accurate, it constitutes a significant political force. Moreover, it is extremely relevant to whether or not Congress can be persuaded to adopt legislation with significant antiracist impacts. Chances for such legislation appear critically related to the ability of its sponsors to develop "program packages" that will appeal to the immediate self-interest of large portions of the white middle class, while simultaneously providing key benefits to minority groups who are deprived or discriminated against.

There are two important qualifications to this strategy. First, such programs will not improve the *relative* position of the minority groups concerned unless they provide larger benefits to those groups than to members of the middle class majority they also aid. From the viewpoint of persons seeking to reduce or eliminate the effects of racism, this "gap-closing" aspect is vital. For example, high-level national prosperity tends to raise everyone's income to some degree. But if all incomes go up to the same degree, then the subordinating effects of racism are not counteracted. The incomes of subordinated persons are still artificially suppressed below the incomes of others. Certainly absolute improvements are important—especially to poor people. But the subordination inherent in racism is essentially a relative condition. Therefore, it is also important not to sacrifice all possibility of gaining relative improvements for deprived or subordinated minority groups in order to form an effective coalition with parts of the white middle class majority.

This leads to the second qualification: it is virtually impossible to create programs which provide *net* benefits both to most severely deprived people and to most of the middle class white majority. Any program which redistributes income to poor people must cause a net loss to some other group. The only group with enough total income to support a meaningful redistribution of this kind is the middle-income majority. So no program can cause *net* redistribution favoring all of the lowest-income group and all of the middle-income group simultaneously. How-

ever, programs can be devised which provide net benefits to most of the lowest-income group and to large segments of the middle-income group. The net expenses they create could fall on the remainder of the middle-income group and on most of the upper-income group. For example, certain Federal-aid-to-education programs might help all families with children in both income groups at the net expense of all households without children in the middle class group. Moreover, such "program packages" can be designed or promoted in ways that soften their negative impact upon those who bear it. For instance, they could be financed out of the "automatic" increase in Federal income tax receipts which occurs because of economic growth without any increase in tax rates. Or they can provide net benefits to only part of the lowest-income group, along with part of the middle-income majority, so their net burden is not extremely large. Congressional supporters of minority-favoring legislation benefiting the wealthy have been successfully designing such "packages" for decades, as the urban renewal program illustrates.

4. *Insure that minority group members are in a position to contribute to the design, execution, and evaluation of all major social policies and programs. This will improve the quality of such policies and programs by introducing a certain sensitivity to human values which is too often lacking in the overly technology-oriented behavior of the white majority.* Persons who are outside "the established system" which dominates economic, political, and cultural life in America have an important contribution to make in improving the output and operation of that system. Without question, the American economic and political system has been an unprecedented success. It has created the highest material standard of living in world history in an atmosphere of great individual freedom and opportunity. Yet the very orientation toward efficiency and high productivity responsible for this

success often overlooks, suppresses, or distorts important human value. *Racism itself is a stunning example.* Others include the dehumanizing routines required on high speed assembly lines, the shattering impacts on family life of migration caused by farm mechanization, and the demeaning procedures incorporated in welfare programs. People who receive significant net benefits from "the system" which commits these dehumanizing acts tend to overlook them entirely, or simply to regard them as a price society must pay for high output. In contrast, people who are essentially "outside the system" are far more acutely conscious of these effects. They suffer from such effects more often, and they are not given a strong incentive to accept them by receipt of other net benefits from the system. Such "outside" groups include not only the minorities subordinated by racist institutions, but also many university students, intellectuals, artistically oriented citizens, and even "hippie dropouts." Partly because they do not receive many material or other rewards directly from the dominant system, these "'outsiders" tend to develop life styles centered on values that emphasize personal characteristics rather than technological efficiency or material success. These values include great sensitivity and openness to the personal expression, individuality, and needs of others—far greater than is typical of the behavior of many middle class Americans incorporated within the system. Such heightened sensitivity is a potentially uplifting contribution to American society in general—indeed, to the operation of the very system in reaction to which it developed. But that contribution can only become effective if such persons can exert significant influence on the design, execution, and evaluation of most major social policies.

An example may help clarify this reasoning. For two decades, many urban highways were constructed through low-income neighborhoods, thus forcing thousands of poor families to move. No compensation was paid to those uprooted unless they owned their own homes, and even then it was grossly inadequate. No relocation services were provided; no alternative housing was built to make up for the destruction of thousands of units in the midst of a shortage of housing for poor people; and little thought was given to the losses caused by destroying local schools, stores, parks, and even whole neighborhoods. This striking insensitivity to the problems of poor people—most of whom were "outside the system"—resulted from the almost completely technological orientation of the highway engineers responsible for building roads. They were concerned solely with moving traffic from point to point in the technically most efficient manner.

Moreover, the middle class majority which used the resulting roads did not want them to behave otherwise. Recently, however, there have been mounting protests from those threatened with displacement—most of whom are Negroes. And local politicians have become far more sensitive to Negro demands, because of recent disorders. So in 1968, Federal policies regarding highway construction were changed to include much more adequate compensation to displaced owners *and* renters, and the provision of relocation assistance and perhaps even new housing. This is a clear example of heightened sensitivity to human needs partly counteracting an overly technological-oriented social policy. Similarly increased sensitivity, particularly to the negative impacts of institutional subordination, should be introduced into other social policies of all kinds—including economic and political—and at all levels—including Federal, State, local, and private. In this way, the dominant part of American society could benefit from the humanizing influence of those whom it has heretofore excluded from any significant power in relation to most major policies. The result should be a society that is different from, and superior to, both the presently dominant system itself and the alternative life style developed by those whom the system has made "outsiders." This

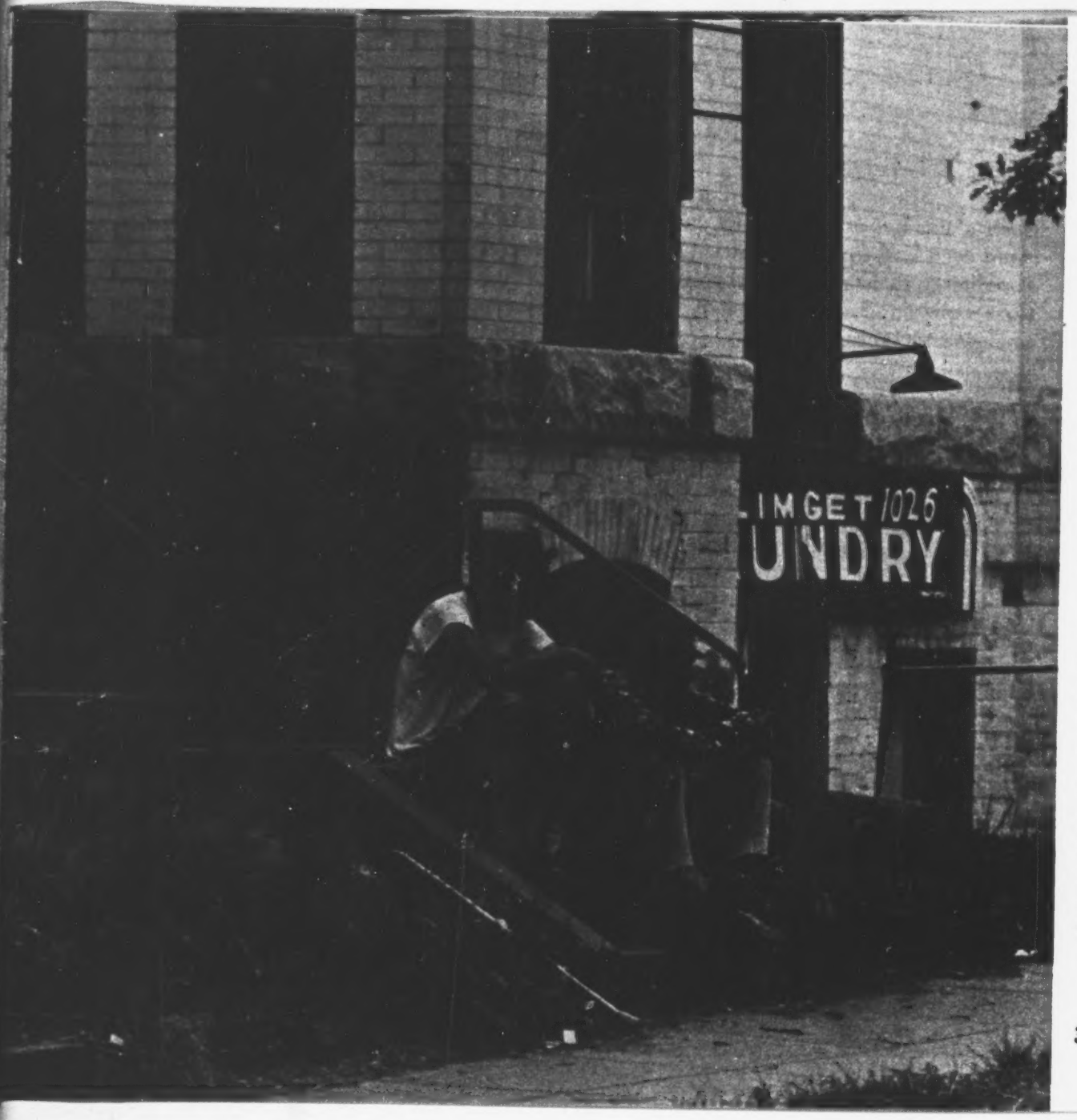
is what Martin Luther King, Jr. meant when he insisted that Negroes and other minorities did not simply want to become part of the white middle class America as it is now. Rather, they want to help build a new society far more sensitive to certain human values than white middle class America has proved to be in the past. Hopefully, it will combine the best of both worlds. But this ideal outcome will be possible only if minority group members are able to influence policy design, execution, and evaluation at all levels in all major social institutions. These include predominantly white institutions which have significant impacts upon both nonwhite and white Americans. Examples are Federal Government agencies, large insurance companies, State governments, local school systems, and nationwide retail firms.

Therefore, placing minority group members in real positions of power and influence within such organizations is not simply a matter of making more and better jobs available to them. But how do we prevent them from becoming part of the system? Institutional racism implies that the structure works so well that it doesn't matter who's in command. It is also a key means of implementing this vital antiracist strategy in society as a whole.

5. *Influence local, State, and national policies and programs—both public and private—so they have certain characteristics which will reduce their possible racist effects.* Two such characteristics have already been discussed: heightened sensitivity to human values, and "gap-closing" improvement of the most deprived or subordinate groups relative to others benefited by the same policies. Others include:

a. Avoidance of any action or arrangement that unnecessarily produces, sustains, or emphasizes derogatory or stigmatizing forms of differentiation. These could involve differentiation by race or color, or by social and economic class. For example, current public housing regulations require that all the families living in a public housing project have very low incomes. This tends to stigmatize such projects as undesirable, especially if they become dominated by unstable multi-problem households. Conceivably, public housing projects could contain a majority of stable moderate-income families who paid higher rents. Then such projects would not be stigmatized as for low-status households only. Similarly, locating all the public housing projects in a city (except those for the elderly) so that nearly all occupants are Negroes has racist effects. This practice causes most whites to identify the need for public housing with race, even though over half of all low-income persons in U.S. central cities are white. Thus, simultaneous differentiation of any programs by *both* poverty and color causes several very undesirable results. First, political support for such programs often declines because racism leads many whites to oppose funding anything they believe mainly aids Negroes. Second, this dual differentiation reinforces the erroneous belief among some whites that most Negroes are dependent, and therefore inferior. Third, participants in such programs are exposed mainly to other deprived people; so their own sense of differentiation and inferiority is reinforced.

b. *Emphasis upon participation by, and within, the private sector rather than direct dependency upon government at any level.* In attacking problems of poverty, poor housing, unemployment, poor health, and other undesirable conditions in large urban centers, the natural tendency will probably be to rely on direct government action as the primary weapon. This is likely because the people suffering from these maladies usually cannot pay enough to support private



remedial action. That is why they are not getting any now.

However, it is vital that society avoid creating low-income minority group neighborhoods that are almost totally dependent upon direct public expenditures aimed at self-maintenance, rather than at producing services consumed by society as a whole. Such a position of primarily nonproductive dependency discourages initiative among residents, reinforces their feelings of inadequacy and inferiority, results in a very low standard of living because of legislative economizing, and tends to confirm existing stereotypes that the residents are lazy and incompetent. It could even lead to a permanent publicly maintained "underclass" in slum areas differentiated by dependency, location, and color. Experience with American Indians conclusively demonstrates the failure of such "public reservations."

This means that as much direct participation by the private sector as possible should be encouraged in remedial programs for these areas. Such programs include education, job creation, training, housing, and even welfare administration. Moreover, as many persons as possible now dependent upon direct public support should be transferred to positions in the private sector. These positions could either be the kinds of remedial programs mentioned above or in truly self-supporting private activities.

However, two vital qualifications must be made. First, this emphasis on the private sector does not imply that positions in government are not productive or desirable. Instead it is simply a balancing counterforce to the natural tendency to use direct government action as the main way to attack these problems. Second, public subsidies will play an essential role in this entire process, even if private firms carry out many of the programs concerned. Training unskilled workers,

teaching low-achieving students, or building housing and pricing it so that poor families can afford it all require public subsidies. They cost more than those who are benefited can either pay themselves or provide through their participation. These extra costs are the real costs of eliminating accumulated deprivation, poverty, ignorance, and racism. It is unreasonable and naive to expect private firms to bear these costs themselves, any more than they bear the costs of achieving other public objectives, such as building highways or putting a man on the moon. The purpose of encouraging private participation is therefore not primarily to reduce costs. Rather it is to tap the many talents in the private sector, to get more of its members personally "involved" in combating racism and poverty, and to reduce the ultimate dependency of those being aided.

c. *Use of a metropolitan areawide geographic focus whenever possible.* Carrying out housing, employment, health, and other programs on a metropolitanwide basis will both discourage the development of geographic separatism, and encourage a realistic view of each metropolitan area as an economically interrelated whole.

At present, racial cleavages on a geographic basis within metropolitan areas are indeed striking. Taken together, the central cities within all 224 U.S. metropolitan areas were 21 percent Negro in 1966. But over 100 percent of their population growth from 1960 to 1966 was Negro (they lost white population). In contrast, the portions of metropolitan areas outside central cities were 95 percent white in 1966, and their population growth from 1960 to 1966 was 98 percent white. In most of the largest metropolitan areas, if these trends continue, central cities will contain Negro majorities within two decades; whereas the surrounding suburbs will remain almost entirely white. This could lead to a political conflict between large central cities and their surrounding suburbs along racial lines. Such a conflict could in turn cause fiscal bankruptcy in the large cities, and could even lead to racial violence and suppression.* Conducting programs aimed at reducing racism on a metropolitanwide level will at least maintain communications between these two racially diverging areas, and may help to counteract emerging racial separatism.

However racially divergent central cities and suburbs become, they are still critically dependent upon each other economically and physically. Central cities contain a majority of the jobs in metropolitan areas, to which millions of suburban commuters travel daily. They are also the nerve centers of many vital networks, including telephone systems, utility systems, water systems, sewage disposal systems, railroads, and highways. Most of the largest corporations in the Nation, and many small firms, have their headquarters and many major plants in central cities. The Nation's key financial institutions are located primarily in large downtown areas, and most cultural and enterainment activities take place in large cities. Most of the leading universities in the country have huge physical plants tying them to central cities. On the other hand, the suburbs supply many of the workers that operate these central city facilities, and contain most of the vital air transportation links in the Nation.

In spite of these intimate interconnections, many white suburbanites are not aware of their dependence upon central cities. They rarely go into such cities, since the suburbs in larger metropolitan areas contain a broad spectrum of shopping facilities, hospitals, banks, entertainment facilities, and even jobs. So some

*Discussed in chapter 16 of the "Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders."

white suburbanites may be led by their spatial isolation to think they can disregard the fiscal and other problems of central cities, especially as the latter become more and more occupied by minority groups. The development of antiracist policies and programs on a metropolitan areawide basis would help to counteract such erroneous views, particularly if it included educating suburbanites concerning their dependence upon central cities.

This conclusion does not contradict the earlier observation that adoption of metropolitan government could be a form of institutional subordination. It would be if it were aimed at preventing nonwhites from dominating a central city government. But many antiracist policies other than local government itself can be carried out on a metropolitan areawide basis without creating such subordination at all. Examples are job training, housing development, educational enrichment, job placement, and transportation programs.

6. *Create recognition among all Americans that overcoming the burdens of racism will cost a great deal of money, time, effort, and institutional change; but that this cost is a worthwhile investment in the future which both society as a whole and individual taxpayers can bear without undue strain.* There is no precise way to estimate the costs of significantly reducing the impacts of racism in the United States. However, the recommendations set forth by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (NACCD) embody a program that would probably accomplish a major part of that job and would greatly reduce poverty and deprivation among whites, too. Rough cost estimates of this program indicate that its many components would add from $15 to $40 billion per year to the Federal budget, depending upon exactly at what levels certain programs (such as building new housing and raising support payments for poor dependent families) were carried out. These costs are roughly equivalent to from 1.8 to 4.7 percent of our gross national product of about $850 billion in 1968.

To some extent, such costs could be financed through future increases in Federal tax receipts that will occur without any rise in tax rates. Because the Federal tax structure is progressive (that is, it contains higher percentage rates for higher dollar incomes), Federal tax receipts rise automatically as American families earn higher incomes. Moreover, these receipts go up *faster* than national income as a whole. This "national dividend" has been estimated to be about $14 billion per year, or more than $150 billion in the next decade. However, a significant portion of it will be spent on programs which have already been adopted with built-in future cost increases. Therefore, some increase in Federal taxes might be needed to launch a major program against racism and deprivation along the lines suggested by the NACCD. A survey recently completed by the NACCD indicated that more than half of all white adult respondents would be willing to pay 10 percent more in income taxes to carry out the kind of program set forth in the NACCD report. That would have yielded an added $12.9 billion in 1969 (including higher corporation taxes). Thus, although the money costs of combating racism and deprivation are very large, it would be possible to pay those costs without placing any overwhelming strain upon either the economy as a whole or most individual taxpayers.

But the costs of effectively combating racism are not limited to money alone. Most Americans would have to reexamine and change their own behavior patterns and many of the structures and practices of the institutions which serve them and in which they participate. This might impose significant psychological

costs upon some people—especially those who now benefit either consciously or unconsciously from racism. Yet those costs would surely be tiny compared to the gain of eliminating all the *existing* costs imposed upon the Nation by racism, as discussed earlier. More important, all the costs necessary to combat racism and deprivation are essentially investments in a greater future output. These investments would gradually increase the economic and other capabilities of millions of persons whose potentials are now inhibited by racism and poverty. Since there are more than 22 million Negro Americans, and millions of other Americans in smaller minority groups, a significant increase in their economic, social, cultural, and political productivity would add immensely to future benefits shared by the entire Nation.

7. *Search out and develop alliances of nonwhites and whites organized to obtain common practical goals, particularly in combating racism.* At present, white and Negro or other minority group communities in most American cities act almost completely independently of each other. This is true in nearly all social, economic, and other nongovernmental activities, though somewhat less so in relation to government. Even efforts to combat racism tend to be conducted separately by both communities. As a result, those efforts are frequently far less effective than they would be if members of each community shared the insights, experience, capabilities, and contacts of the other. Moreover, such nearly complete separation of whites and nonwhites breeds mistrust, fear, and hostility between these groups, and generates both rumors and stereotypes based upon ignorance. Leaders in both communities should therefore take the initiative in organizing and carrying out well defined joint projects (perhaps of existing organizations) to reduce racism.

One effective type of project would link influential whites with members of low-income Negro communities. They could jointly support continuous surveillance and evaluation of the quality of various local and national programs in those communities. The programs involved could include everything from garbage collection to on-the-job training. The whites could bring their influence to bear upon local and national government and private officials, using information and insights furnished by Negro observers living in the affected areas. This would in turn greatly enhance the effective power of Negro residents and their influence upon the design of future programs.

8. *Create many more positively oriented contacts between whites and Negroes and other minority group members—including personal contacts, intergroup contacts, and those occurring through mass media.* It is an unfortunate fact that most whites have few, if any, personal friends or even acquaintances who are Negro or Mexican American or members of other minorities—and vice versa. The resulting dearth of "normal" contacts between people of different races and colors but of like interests and capabilities is one of the main reasons why erroneous prejudices and rumors continue to flourish in each community about the other. Moreover, many interracial contacts which do occur (such as those between white police and Negro citizens, or white television viewers and Negro rioters shown in newscasts) are negatively rather than positively oriented. Therefore, persistent efforts in increasing positively oriented contacts between races should be made by private individuals, private groups, and the mass media (which have markedly increased such contacts in the past 2 years).

9. *Open up many more opportunities for minority group members in now predominantly white organizations (such as businesses), areas (such as suburban neighborhoods), or institutions (such as public schools),* and encourage other arrangements where members of different groups work, live, or act together. This *strategy of integration* is implicit in many of the eight others. Discussing

integration fully would require another long essay. However, I believe *integration* implies much more positive action than desegregation. The latter consists of removing discriminatory barriers so that all have equal access to opportunities in proportion to their existing abilities to compete "within the system." Hence, desegregation is a vital first step toward integration. But such removal of unfair barriers makes no allowance for the fact that the existing competitive abilities of many minority group members suffer the effects of prolonged repression. Until those effects have been overcome, true social justice in many situations will require positive supplementation of the impaired abilities of many minority group members. I believe the term *integration* should imply such a policy.

Any situation regarding two groups can therefore be considered *integrated* if all the following conditions exist:

Enough members of both groups are *actually present* so that everyone in the situation constantly perceives both groups in day-to-day experience.

Enough members of the minority group in that situation (who might be white) are present so that as individuals they do not feel isolated or lost within the majority group.

The minority-group in that situation exercises power and influence at least proportional to its numbers there. In some cases, the average capabilities of the minority-group members will be lower than those of the majority-group members. Then minority-group power and influence proportional to their number will be more than proportional to their overall competitive abilities. That is where the majority might deliberately supplement the competitive abilities of the minority group, or the influence that group would wield based on such abilities alone. An example is providing special training for some black workers in mainly white firms.

Integration aims at achieving equality of access to the opportunities and benefits of society both immediately and in the long run. It also seeks to promote more daily intergroup experience so members of each group will learn to accept others fully as individuals. Such experience will not result from just *potential* equality of access by minority group members to facilities or areas now predominantly occupied by majority group members. Instead, it requires *actual mixing* of these groups on a daily basis. That is one reason why integration implies positive programs rather than just the removal of discriminatory barriers.

Effective integration of many kinds. including jobs and schools, is often inhibited because such a high proportion of Negroes and other minority groups live in segregated areas. Thus, achieving significant integration implies much greater Negro movement into now predominantly white residential areas as the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders stated. At present, this seems out of favor with many minority group leaders seeking group solidarity and stronger political power through group concentration. Yet, as the NACCD concluded, significant integration is essential for true equality of opportunity in America—especially economic opportunity—because separate societies cannot be made equal.

The nine strategies described above are not mutually exclusive; nor do they exhaust all the possible ways to combat racism. Yet they encompass the key approaches that must be carried out over the next few years—and decades—if racism is to be reduced to an insignificant factor in America.

Conclusion

Americans seeking to combat racism should understand three additional points. First, racism in this country is the product of more than 300 years of systematic subordination of Indians and Negroes by the white majority, plus later subordination of still other groups. The racist attitudes, behavior patterns, institutional structures, and cultural heritage built up over these three centuries are profoundly embedded in our society. They cannot be eradicated overnight, or in just a few years. Therefore, effectively combating racism will require continuous and prolonged persistence by both whites and Negroes. They must be deeply committed—indeed, dedicated—to this goal.

However, there are signs that many white Americans are already tired of hearing about "the race question." Because most whites conceive of racism only in the overt forms, they believe it is rapidly disappearing or has already diminished to an insignificant level. For example, in 1966, 70 percent of the national sample of whites interviewed by the Louis Harris organization thought that Negroes were moving too fast toward integration.

This leads to the second point: the principal task of those white Americans combating racism lies within the white community, rather than within nonwhite communities. As pointed out earlier, no policies or programs aimed at improving conditions in black America or among Mexican Americans or other minorities can possibly succeed unless they are politically supported by a majority of whites. Such support is essential to obtain the money and institutional changes required to alter those conditions. Yet that support will not be forthcoming unless most whites significantly revise their present views concerning racism. Many whites, especially those living in suburbs, are almost completely isolated from any direct contacts with life in Negro ghettos or Puerto Rican neighborhoods or other minority group areas. Hence, they fail to perceive the compelling need for further remedial actions there. Moreover, they do not understand how institutional subordination works. Therefore, these whites think the plight of ghetto dwellers is largely their own fault, rather than largely the product of racism expressed by institutions controlled by whites.

Only two forces can change this dominant view. The first consists of the dedicated efforts of well informed white leaders within white communities who understand all forms of racism, and why much more must be done to eradicate them. The second is development of greater capabilities and power within the Negro community and other nonwhite communities. By its very nature, this development must occur primarily through the efforts of nonwhite Americans themselves. Once such development begins, it will better demonstrate the true potentialities and abilities of those Americans, and give their leaders a stronger bargaining position from which to influence public and private policies. These changes may in turn persuade the white majority to devote more resources to the task of still further developing nonwhite capabilities, both in nonwhite communities and throughout society.

Thus the process of overcoming racism involves a continuous feedback between changing the views of the white majority and expanding the capabilities and power of nonwhite communities. It is clear that the most critical role in this process for whites fighting racism is influencing the opinions of other whites. Similarly, the most critical role for nonwhites is developing their own communities.

This conclusion certainly does not imply that no whites should work in nonwhite areas, or vice versa. In fact, such joint action is one of the nine basic strategies for combating racism. But the predominant efforts of whites in this combat should nevertheless involve those strategies focused upon the white community itself. For no one else can carry out those strategies—yet without them, the entire struggle is doomed.

Opposing racism is indeed a worthy objective for all Americans. It is the highest tradition of democracy to promote equality of opportunity and freedom of choice for all citizens in fact as well as in theory. But such equality and freedom cannot exist as long as racism continues to operate through long-established and pervasive institutional structures and behavior patterns. No other single issue in domestic affairs has more profound implications regarding America's success in achieving its own ideals, or the kinds of social changes that must be carried out to attain them. That is why a clear understanding of racism and how to combat all its many unrecognized forms, plus a strong dedication to doing so, are essential characteristics for every true American.

Commissioners' Statements

Statement of Chairman Hesburgh, concurred in by Vice Chairman Horn and Commissioners Freeman, Mitchell, and Garcia,

America stands today at a crossroads, and it may well be that our Nation needs more than facts and legal doctrines to assure its future growth and to avoid its demise in a blood bath of racial conflict. The United States Commission on Civil Rights is dedicated to promote equality of opportunity for all Americans. We have sought to serve as a kind of national conscience. Despite great progress as a result of actions by the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of our Government in the last decade and a half, for many millions of Americans the promise of our Constitution and our Bill of Rights has yet to become a reality. Our factual and legal reports have amply demonstrated this continuing gap. How to turn the tide?

We now seem to be facing a new impasse, and some might well argue that the obstacles to future and continuing progress are of a structural and attitudinal nature. Some attribute this to unconscious prejudice on the part of many Americans. This essay by Anthony Downs addresses itself to the problem of "white racism" and suggests a few of the possible approaches to overcoming it. Some will disagree with the diagnosis and the recommendations for action. But the problem is of such overreaching national importance that further analysis and discussion of this and other approaches are vital if we are to improve the quality of American life and maintain civil peace in this Republic.

The Commission is publishing this essay as a challenge to all thoughtful and concerned Americans. We claim no ultimate wisdom. We seek new, creative, and imaginative answers to this challenge that faces all Americans and, in a larger context, mankind generally.

The larger issue of world peace may well turn on our own ingenuity as a Nation to achieve meaningful equality of opportunity for all our citizens, however difficult this may be, whatever sacrifices it might entail. Our Nation is dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Our present position of world leadership—and our conscience—demands that we deliver these rights that we profess to all Americans, not in rhetoric, but in reality. Only in this way can we, in fact, become one Nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The task that faces us today is to make this dream come true. We hope to present, in the days ahead, other options and other plans addressed to this hope. We will supplement these essays with factual and legal studies that will further illustrate the necessity of realistic plans for progress—such as the one presented here.

Statement of Commissioner Mitchell, concurred in by Chairman Hesburgh, Vice Chairman Horn and Commissioners Freeman and Garcia

The people of the United States, through their Congress, established the Commission on Civil Rights more than a decade ago in an effort to secure equality of opportunity for all citizens of their country.

During this period the Commission has engaged in studies of Federal and State, public and private policies and practices in the areas of voting, housing, employment, education, public accommodations, and the administration of justice. In all of these areas there has been real progress, as evidenced by new and effective legislation, improved policies and procedures, and substantailly elevated conditions of life for millions of our people.

Yet it cannot now be said that we have turned the corner in civil rights and that progress from here on will be the product of simply improving the enforcement of laws and the further expansion of sound policies at all levels of Federal, State, and local government. The end of the struggle is not in sight, and it appears to many observers that the major obstacle to the achievement of full opportunity may well be in the attitudes of many of our fellow citizens.

The fact is that no national problem is solved without the adoption of proper attitudes on the part of citizens who seek such progress. No law can be said to be truly effective in this regard unless it is respected, not only by those directly affected, but also by those, not involved, who supported its principles in the first place.

We are seeing this today in many areas of public life: In citizen resistance to draft laws, in crime and delinquency, in matters of taxation, and in the general conduct of many citizens of all ages under the stresses of modern life.

The Commission's studies of the problem of equal opportunity have led it into many areas and these have been reflected in its research reports and general statements. Now it has addressed itself to the vexing problem of public attitudes toward equal opportunity, which seem here, as in other instances, to be so vital to the achievement of progress in an area of life in which the conscience of our entire Nation must surely be involved.

If individual and group attitudes are a threat to the pursuit of civil peace and equal opportunity, and if they do indeed stand as an offset to the application of ordinary measures in law and policy, then a continuing study of these attitudes is essential to further progress.

Anthony Downs' paper on "white racism" is one effort to present a view of some attitudes that seem to inhibit further progress in the field of civil rights. Not everyone will agree with its fundamental assumption and many will disagree with Mr. Downs' approaches to a solution. The Commission feels, however, that this and other promising areas should be investigated and made a part of its library of information and advice in its field.

Statement by Vice Chairman Horn

To accuse the United States of America of being a "racist" society is inaccurate and misleading. In signing this report, I do not interpret this as a belief held by either the author or my colleagues on the Commission. But to say this does not mean that I do not recognize that various individuals, groups, and structures within our society exhibit racist tendencies and undertake racist actions—either intentionally or unintentionally. This, sadly, is a condition which has existed at times in all societies, ancient and modern.

I believe that it is paternalism of the worst sort to condemn one type of racism and to condone the other. I am opposed to black racism, white racism, and racism in any form wherever it is found. I believe that the great majority of the American people are also opposed to racism in all its forms.

This manuscript is an attempt to define what one man believes is "racism"—that is, the attitudes, actions, and institutional structures by which one human being is subordinated to another simply because of the color of his skin. I disagree with some of Dr. Downs' examples and the logic of some of his supporting arguments, but I think that he has made an immensely worthwhile contribution and that his views should be widely aired. Others might have a different and an equally compelling analysis. Hopefully, the resultant discussion will lead to a better understanding of the problem and an effort by all Americans of good will to make constructive progress.

I have long believed that it is essential that a self-inventory be developed so that we can utilize the good will and energy which is spread throughout the land to overcome any racist manifestations which do exist. Dr. Downs' essay is a start in this direction. He is showing us some of the challenges and opportunities which lie before each of us. Now is the time to look around our neighborhoods, our communities, and our cities to attack these problems wherever they occur.

Statement of Commissioner Rankin

The Commission during its life generally has limited its reports and studies to empirical studies of subjects that Congress by legislation put within the authority of the Commission. Previous studies have been exhaustive and factual. Many have contained recommendations made by the Commission to Congress and the President based on this factual information. With the publication of this essay, admirable as it is, we depart from this well established policy. I am not sure that it is a good move. The statements above, made by the Chairman and by Commissioner Mitchell give the reasons why the Commission has sponsored the publication of this essay. They are good reasons. On balance, however, I still am not sure that it is wise and appropriate for the Commission to issue this publication. Certainly the appropriateness of any publication of this type will be enhanced if in the future the Commission sponsors other essays developing possibly conflicting points of view which, I understand, the Commission intends to do.

Insofar as the essay itself is concerned, I accept the thrust of this paper and recognize the importance and value of the points made. I still question whether majority racism is white racism and am aware that majority racism is not solely an American institution. The use of the word "racism" gives me some concern. "Racism" is a pejorative word which often impedes, rather than advances, responsible discussion. Discrimination, on the contrary, is a meaningful substantive term, capable of measurement and associated with a number of variables, of which membership in a so-called race is only one.

Statement of Commissioner Freeman

The Downs essay represents an effort to bring the calmness of reason to a subject whose implications have too often been obscured by the heat of emotion. For this reason alone, it deserves the thoughtful consideration of those who are seriously interested in reaching to the heart of a problem that has perplexed Americans for several hundred years. I do not see in this document any attempt to assign individual or collective guilt for what has taken place in the past, but I do see it as a guide for future action to correct yesterday's mistakes.

I realize how difficult it must be for white Americans to accept anything so ugly as the idea that racism is stitched through the fabric of our national life, but the reality of how minority groups exist in this country argues persuasively that this is true. As individuals, most Americans do not consciously practice racism, and this document makes no claim that they do. However, in supporting institutions that practice racial subordination, white Americans must accept the responsibility for the continuation of pervasive racism in this Nation. Only they have the power—and my hope is that they have the will—to change these institutions and pull this Nation back from the terrible and irrevocable abyss of two separate societies.

I cannot subscribe to any theory that seeks to equate black racism with white racism. A key difference is that black institutions have not been built and maintained to keep whites in a subordinate position. Further, where there have been manifestations of black racism, these instances have occurred primarily on an individual basis without the support of any sizable community, and the same cannot be said about the practice, whether consciously or unconsciously, of white racism. Black or white racism are both to be condemned, but the difference in their nature and importance must be recognized lest even more confusion surround a subject about which there is already too much confusion.

For 12 years the Commission has been concerned with major inequities in our society growing out of race, voting, education, etc. The publication of this document, therefore, represents a new approach, an attempt to cast light on the basic cause of the disease whose effects we have studied so carefully.

If the publication of this document can help stimulate discussion leading to action, it will have served the American people well. Debate can continue to rage over whether or not we use the adjective "racist" to describe contemporary American society. But more important than this semantics quarrel is whether we have the will to honestly face issues and to do what must be done to remove the constraints our society places on people.

John W. Gardner expressed the idea in this way:

> We will not find a way out of our present troubles until we have the courage to look honestly at evil where evil exists, until we forswear hypocrisy, until we call injustice and dishonor by their right names, and until a large number of Americans from each sector of opinion—right, left, and center—are willing to acknowledge their own special contribution to our troubles.

There are no easy answers, but answers must be found. We owe it to ourselves and future generations to persist in attempts to find these answers.